

Application No. 09/585,747

Filed: June 2, 2000

TC Art Unit: 2132

Confirmation No.: 7128

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending.

The specification has been amended, and the abstract revised, to address the objections in the Office Action.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Howard and Moriconi. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a method of authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, the method comprising (1) receiving a service request from the user at a first data processing agent, (2) submitting an authentication request from the first data processing agent to a second data processing agent to authenticate the user, (3) receiving a response to the authentication request at the first data processing agent from the second data processing agent, and (4) if the received response indicates that the user is successfully authenticated, providing the requested service to the user.

Howard is seen to show a system in which a client 100 attempts to access a web page on an affiliate server 104, and if the user is not authenticated at the affiliate server, the user is redirected to an authentication server 110. The authentication

- 4 -

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server authenticates the user, sets "cookies" on the client containing authentication and user profile information, and redirects the client to the affiliate server, which then provides a personalized web page to the user based on the user profile information that appears in the cookies set by the authentication server.

It is noted that the Office Action does not specify exactly how claim 1 is being read on Howard. It is assumed in the following remarks that the "first data processing agent" of claim 1 is being read on the affiliate server 104, and that the "second data processing agent" is being read on the authentication server 104. If this assumption is not correct, it is respectfully requested that a subsequent Office Action indicate specifically how the Howard reference is being applied and that Applicant be provided an opportunity to respond accordingly.

Moriconi shows a method for maintaining security in a distributed computing environment utilizing a "policy manager" and an "application guard" located on a client for managing access to securable components as specified by the security policy. Figure 5 and associated text in columns 10-11 describe that the application guard is integrated with the application 312 via an interface 512, and contains an authorization engine 316 for

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example. Although the Office Action alleges that this part of Moriconi shows first and second data processing agents, it does not specify which specific components of Moriconi are being taken as these two claimed elements. While the authorization engine 316 presumably receives authorization requests from the application 312, there is not seen to be any intermediate component that receives service requests from the application 312 and in turn provides the requested service after receiving authorization from the authorization engine 316.

It is respectfully urged that the combination of Howard and Moriconi do not render claim 1 obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Contrary to the assertions in the Office Action, neither of these references teaches or suggests the following elements recited in claim 1:

...

submitting an authentication request from the first data processing agent to a second data processing agent to authenticate the user,

receiving a response to the authentication request at the first data processing agent from the second data processing agent, and

if the received response indicates that the user is successfully authenticated, providing the requested service to the user.

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In Howard, the authentication request is submitted from the client system to the authentication server after the client system has been redirected by the affiliate server. The affiliate server receives the service request but does not generate an authentication request to the authentication server - that task is left to the client. Similarly, the affiliate server does not receive a response from the authentication server to an authentication request generated by the affiliate server. It only receives information after the client itself has requested and received authentication from the authentication server. Thus, Howard does not show an authentication method in which an authentication request is submitted from a first data processing agent to a second data processing agent to authenticate a user, and in which a response to the authentication request is received at the first data processing agent from the second data processing agent.

Furthermore, Moriconi does not teach or suggest such an authentication method, either, and in fact the Office Action has not alleged any such teaching in Moriconi. Moriconi shows only that an application has an "application guard" interface to an authorization engine, but not first and second data processing agents that interact in the manner set forth in claim 1.

-7-

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Because neither Howard nor Moriconi teach or suggest the above elements of claim 1, these references cannot render claim 1 obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to be allowable notwithstanding the teaching of these references.

The remaining claims incorporate, either directly or indirectly, the above elements of claim 1, and therefore these claims are allowable in view of Howard and Moriconi for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

Favorable action is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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